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### CLAIMS

1-47. (Canceled).

48. (New) A method for preparing a granular, non-pasting, hydroxyalkylated cold water soluble starch, comprising the steps of:

providing a starch; and

reacting said starch in an aqueous slurry with a starch hydroxyalkylating agent in the presence of an alcohol and an alkali metal at a temperature effective to produce a granular, non-pasting hydroxyalkylated starch having a level of hydroxyalkyl substitution of about 10% or greater; and

crosslinking said starch with a poly-functional crosslinking agent.

49. (New) A method according to claim 48, wherein said poly-functional crosslinking agent is selected from among phosphorus oxychloride and epichlorohydrin.

50. (New) A method according to claim 48, wherein the level of hydroxyalkyl substitution ranges from about 10% to about 20% after hydroxyalkylation.

51. (New) A method according to claim 48, wherein the level of hydroxyalkyl substitution ranges from about 10% to about 16% after hydroxyalkylation.

52. (New) A method according to claim 48, wherein said temperature ranges from about 90° to about 110°C.

53. (New) A method according to claim 48, wherein the reaction of starch with the hydroxyalkylating agent occurs for a time period ranging from about 1.5 hours to about 2 hours.

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54. (New) A method according to claim 48, wherein said hydroxyalkylating agent is propylene oxide or ethylene oxide.

55. (New) A method according to claim 48, wherein said hydroxyalkylating agent is ethylene oxide.

56. (New) A method for preparing a granular, non-pasting, hydroxyalkylated cold water soluble starch, comprising the steps of:

providing a starch; and

reacting said starch in an aqueous slurry with a starch hydroxyalkylating agent in the presence of an alcohol and an alkali metal and a poly-functional crosslinking agent at a temperature effective to produce a granular, non-pasting, crosslinked hydroxyalkylated starch having a level of hydroxyalkyl substitution of about 10% or greater.

57. (New) A method according to claim 56, wherein said poly-functional crosslinking agent is selected from among phosphorus oxychloride and epichlorohydrin.

58. (New) A method according to claim 56, wherein the level of hydroxyalkyl substitution ranges from about 10% to about 20% after hydroxyalkylation.

59. (New) A method according to claim 56, wherein the level of hydroxyalkyl substitution ranges from about 10% to about 16% after hydroxyalkylation.

60. (New) A method according to claim 56, wherein said temperature ranges from about 90°C to about 110°C.

61. (New) A method according to claim 56, wherein the reaction of starch with the hydroxyalkylating agent occurs for a time period ranging from about 1.5 hours to about 2 hours.